

Agriculture is a critical part of Oregon's economy. From beef to nurseries to berries, family farmers and ranchers are providing the basic needs on which Americans and millions of people around the world depend. At the same time, American farmers are facing new and increasing pressures from budget deficits, trade rules, urban sprawl, climate change, rising energy costs and shrinking water resources. Congress must not miss the opportunity presented by the current Farm Bill reauthorization to craft policies that are good for farmers, the land, the environment, our economy, and the world.

[Promoting Healthy Food and Farms](#)

[Reforming Farm Subsidies](#)

[Protecting Farmland and the Environment](#)

Promoting Healthy Food and Farms

Across America, there is an epidemic of hunger and poor nutrition, as many families can't afford to put healthy foods on their tables. Congressman Blumenauer believes that increasing the availability of healthy and fresh foods in schools, hospitals, and underserved communities is critical to improving the overall health and food security of the United States. By growing and distributing some of these foods locally and regionally, we can create profitable markets for many small and mid-sized independent farmers and ranchers, help to preserve farmland, and protect the environment with reduced transportation costs and more sustainable farming practices.

Locally and regionally, food distribution works hand-in-hand with community-led efforts to reduce hunger and provide affordable foods needed for good nutrition, especially in communities underserved by retail food stores. Reduced-price meals in schools have been proven to help students achieve higher test scores, while food stamps can help many families and vulnerable Americans bridge the gap between what they can afford and what they need.



Reforming Farm Subsidies

Our current farm programs provide little help to most American farmers and ranchers, particularly those in Oregon. The majority of commodity payments go to a few large-scale farm operations, with only 40% of farmers receiving any commodity payments at all. In fact, over 50% of farm subsidies go to only 22 Congressional districts. As a result, these payments do little to support or sustain rural communities, which continue to lose jobs and see their populations decline. Clearly, current farm programs are not meeting the needs of today's family farmers or their communities.



Protecting Farmland and the Environment

The United States loses more than 1 million acres of farmland every year. Much of our best farmland, which is close to our growing cities, is being lost to development and sprawl. The pressure of sprawl is forcing farmers off their land and depriving us all of the benefits of near-by sustainable agriculture, such as local food and a host of environmental benefits.



Related Articles
{loadposition related}